

# HEAVY ON THE THROTTLE,

*[The author is a 21-year-old Marine Corps corporal who asked to remain anonymous.]*

**I**t was a typical Saturday morning in Oceanside, Calif., when my buddy swung by my apartment on his Kawasaki ZX-7R. He wanted me to join him for a ride around town on our motorcycles.

I still was half asleep as I stumbled over to the door and started chatting with him. When he finally had convinced me to come along, I donned a pair of blue jeans and a long-sleeved T-shirt. On my way out the door, I grabbed my leather motorcycle boots, gloves and, of course, my helmet. However, I



# DEEP INTO TROUBLE

left my leather jacket behind. The morning California sun was warming things up quickly, and I knew I'd be uncomfortable in no time if I wore that jacket. Besides, we only were going for a short ride.

We started out just cruising around, enjoying the weather, scenery and, of course, our motorcycles. When we got to where the highway crossed an interstate, we pulled over at a gas station to top off our tanks and to figure out what we wanted to do next. Instead of turning around and heading home, we decided to make a day of it; we were going to take the interstate south toward San Diego.

Shortly after we hit the interstate, I suddenly had a strong urge to open up the throttle on my Aprilia RSV 1000 Mille—even though traffic was fairly heavy. At more than 100 mph, I was cutting and weaving in and out of traffic and leaving my friend in the dust. I was picking my way through a cluster of vehicles when I glanced in the next lane over and about 25 feet ahead and saw a highway-patrol car. A check of my speedometer sent a sobering thought flashing through my head, "I'm going to blow right by this cop while doing 150 mph."

My first instinct was to slow down, so I pulled in the clutch lever and applied the front brake. I guess I pulled too hard because, in the next instant, I felt my bike slip left. Then, I was on my back, sliding down the asphalt. "Oh no, I'm not wearing my leather jacket!" I thought. "This is going to hurt badly!"

After sliding for what seemed like an eternity, I came to a tumbling stop and instantly was on my feet, walking to the side of the freeway. I remember thinking to myself at the time, "Oh my

God, I'm walking!" I then turned my attention to the traffic that had been behind me. Cars in all four lanes were stopped a couple hundred feet from where I had stopped sliding. The drivers thankfully had seen what was happening and had time to slow down.

The highway patrolman I had

seen had pulled over, with the car's lights flashing, so I started walking toward him. It was about this time, as he climbed out of his car and started running toward me, that I felt my first pain. I looked down and saw my shirt was hanging off me by only a few threads, and half my jeans were gone. My injuries included two sprained ankles, two bruised heels, back contusions, and considerable road rash, especially on my knees, elbows, my shoulders, and my hands.

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The thin, nylon-mesh, "summer" gloves I was wearing hadn't held up very good. If I had been wearing my leather jacket and full leather gloves, most of the road rash on my upper body would have been reduced or perhaps eliminated. Thankfully, my helmet had worked as designed, and I didn't have any head injuries.

I got into an ambulance but not before the patrolman had lectured me on how lucky I was to be alive. Once I reached the local emergency room, doctors quickly cleaned and treated my wounds, which hurt a lot more at that point than when I had incurred them. I was bandaged up and released six hours later.

I know I'm lucky to be alive today and for having just minor injuries; unfortunately, I wasn't as lucky with the patrolman. He cited me for speeding faster than 100 mph, which will translate into a hefty fine once I settle at a future court date. On top of that, my insurance rates likely will increase, and, of course, there's the matter of the damage I did to my motorcycle. That's going to cost me about \$11,000 for parts—excluding maintenance costs and shop space.

It's fun and thrilling to fly down the road at a high rate of speed on a motorcycle, but, take it from me, it's just not worth the consequences. I know—I learned the hard way. ■